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The Commission of Governor Coddington and the Early Charters of Rhode Island

*A Paper read before the Society February 19, 1923, by the
President.*

NOTE—In this paper a very brief attempt is made to show the impression which the presentation of such a commission as that given to William Coddington of a life governorship was likely to make upon the minds of the early settlers of Rhode Island; emphasizing its utter lack of agreement with their strong views of self government and also the contrast between its character and that of the charters which they obtained for their government from England.

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth upon the forest-covered shores of New England, they had no authority from the Crown of England either to the land, upon which they erected their houses and which they began to cultivate, nor to the system of self-government which they adopted. In spite of the fact that in that most remarkable compact, drawn up and signed in the cabin of the Mayflower, the first delineation of absolute equality and free government which the world had known, they state, "We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dreade soveraigne, Lord, King James, etc.," they had from him no power to "Combine themselves together into a civill body politick." They were squatters upon land belonging to the London Council and deliberately cut off in their self-government from all relations to their fatherland. But the very nature of the document proves the breadth of their vision, the strength of their personal character, and the extent of their ambition.

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Similar in independence and qualities of individual adventure were those who settled Massachusetts Bay who, although they brought with them a patent and a charter, yet manifested the same desire for freedom and demand for self-government which characterized all the early settlers of New England.

That the men who settled Providence and Rhode Island were like their predecessors at Plymouth and Massachusetts is evident from the manner in which they organized their government. With no precedent to follow, they established such institutions as had never before been put forth. First, Roger Williams, without a charter or authority from England, formed a sort of government which was the simplest kind of democracy; wherein all questions were settled by the landowners in town meeting; and although this gradually developed into a somewhat more positive form of government, the people of Providence were not tied down by any definite code of laws. The settlers of Aquidneck, though similarly self-governing, before leaving Boston formed a more orderly organization, as follows: "The seventh day of the first month, 1638, we whose names are underwritten do hereby solemnly in the presence of Jehovah, incorporate ourselves into a body politick, and as He shall help, will submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given us in His holy word of truth, to be guided and judged thereby, . . . " further "We do elect and constitute William Coddington a judge among us, and do covenant to yield all due honor unto him according to the laws of God, and so far as in us lies to maintain the honour and privileges of his place which shall hereafter be ratified according unto God. The Lord help us so to do." This was followed by the following oath: "I, William Coddington, Esq., being called and chosen by the freemen incorporate of this body politic to be a judge amongst them, do covenant to do justice, give judgment impartially, according to the laws of God, and to maintain the fundamental rights and privileges of this body politic which shall hereafter be ratified according unto God. The Lord help me so to do."

Thus, at the beginning of the organization of the town of Portsmouth William Coddington was the leader, and those associated with him were firmly determined to act in accordance with their own judgment, being lead by the teaching of the word of God as they understood it. From the first, therefore, they were not people either to be driven by others or to acknowledge obedience to anyone, except as the result of their own selection of a leader.

Having settled themselves, as did Roger Williams, upon land not claimed by Plymouth or Massachusetts Bay, they were encroaching upon the rights of the London Council, to which all this region had been given by the Crown of England.

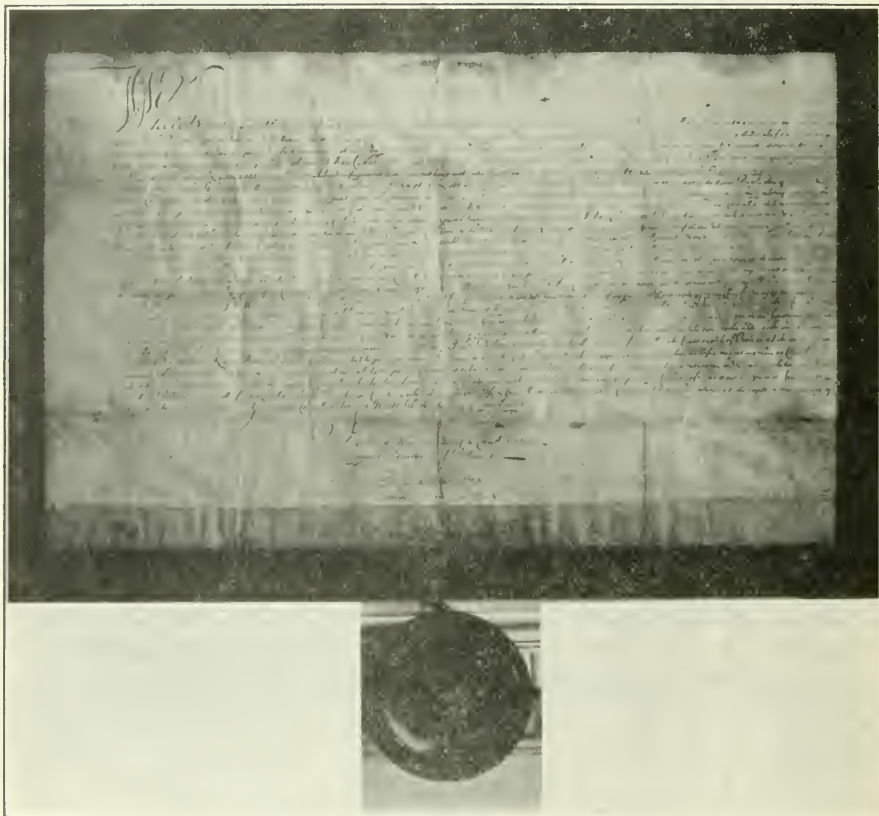
In 1643 Providence, Portsmouth and Newport, which three towns existing side by side were friendly, with occasional causes for disagreement, united in the determination to obtain from England a definite right to their lands and to their independent government. Accordingly, in 1642 at Newport by the General Court, it was ordered, "That a committee be appointed to consult about the procuration of a patent for this island and islands, and lands adjacent, and to draw up petition or petitions, and to send letter or letters for the same end to Sir Henry Vane, and that if any opportunity be presented they shall have full power to transact and send to the forenam'd gentleman or any others whom they shall think meet, for the speedy effecting of said business." Similar action having been taken by the people of Providence, Roger Williams was appointed as the representative of the three towns, and embarked for England in 1643 to carry out the plans so described. After an absence of a year and a half, he returned, bringing with him the following Charter from the Council:

*PATENT OF PROVIDENCE MAR. 14-24, 1643

....Whereas....there is a Tract of Land
....called by the Name of the Narragansett
Bay; bordering Northward and Northeast on
the Patent of the Massachusetts, East and South-

* This charter was given in the name of the Earl of Warwick, who was chairman of a committee appointed by Parliament to control the affairs of the colonies. The King had fled from the capital and the Long Parliament was ruling England.

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THE CODDINGTON CHARTER

east on Plymouth Patent, South on the Ocean, and on the West and Northwest by the Indians called Nahigganneucks, alias Narragansetts; the whole Tract extending about Twenty-five English Miles unto the Pequot River and Country.

And whereas divers well affected and industrious English Inhabitants, of the Towns of Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport in the tract aforesaid, have adventured to make a nearer neighborhood and Society with the great body of the Narragansetts, which may in Time by the blessing of God upon their Endeavours, lay a sure Foundation of Happiness to all America. And have also purchased, and are purchasing of and amongst the said Natives, some other Places, which may be convenient both for Plantations, and also for building of Ships, Supply of Pipe Staves and other Merchandize. And whereas the said English have represented their Desire . . . to have their hopeful Beginnings approved and confirmed, by granting unto them a Free Charter of Civil Incorporation and Government; . . . In due Consideration of the said Premises, the said Robert Earl of Warwick, . . . and the greater number of the said Commissioners, . . . out of a Desire to encourage the good Beginnings of the said Planters, Do, by the Authority of the aforesaid Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, . . . grant . . . to the aforesaid Inhabitants of the Towns of Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport, a free and absolute Charter of Incorporation, to be known by the Name of "The Incorporation of Providence Plantations, in the Narragansett Bay, in New England." . . . Together with full Power and Authority to rule themselves, and such others as shall hereafter inhabit within any Part of the said Tract of land, by such a Form of Civil Government, as by voluntary consent of all, or the greater Part of them, they

shall find most suitable to their Estate and Condition; and, for that End, to make and ordain such Civil Laws and Constitutions, and to inflict such punishments upon Transgressors, and for Execution thereof, so to place, and displace Officers of Justice, as they, or the greatest Part of them, shall by free Consent agree unto. Provided nevertheless, that the said Laws, Constitutions, and Punishments, for the Civil Government of the said Plantations, be conformable to the Laws of England, so far as the Nature and Constitution of the place will admit. And always reserving to the said Earl, and Commissioners, and their Successors, Power and Authority for to dispose the general Government of that, as it stands in Relation to the Rest of the Plantations in America as they shall conceive from Time to Time, most conducting to the general Good of the said Plantations, the Honour of his Majesty, and the Service of the State....”

It would seem that this charter granted all the powers of self-government which even the bold and free independent spirits of those towns could desire. But there were diversities of interests, so that for three years no definite action was taken to carry out the plans suggested by this document. As Palfrey in his history declares, “With resolute perverseness they still stood apart, each settlement from the other settlement, and parties from within each settlement from other parties.”

Into such harmony of action and agreement as prevailed they also took the town of Warwick, so that these four towns, Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick gradually grew closer together until in 1647, “It was agreed that all should set their hands to an engagement to the charter.” A full code of laws was at this time established, and it was agreed as follows: “For-as-much as we have received from our noble lords and honoured governors, and that by virtue of an ordinance of the Parliament of England, a free and absolute charter of civil incorporation,

we do jointly agree to incorporate ourselves and so to remain a body politic.... it is agreed.... that the form of government established in Providence Plantations is *Democratical*, that is to say, a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all, or the greater part, of the free inhabitants." John Coggeshall was elected President and Roger Williams, William Coddington, and others assistants, but as Palfrey adds, "The machine had taken some three years to construct and set a-going, after its construction had been authorized by the patent. In three years more it ran down." Why, we may well ask, with such men who knew their own minds, with such broad powers as they had, with such a liberal government, should there have been trouble, especially as Roger Williams and John Clarke were doing all they could to maintain the union and a friendly spirit?

Although we may not enter fully into the feeling of those men and what caused their troubles, some light may be cast upon the matter if we recall the name by which in this charter the combination of these towns was called. Roger Williams, who procured the charter, had the name given to it, "The Incorporation of Providence Plantations in the Narragansett Bay in New England." There was no reference in the name to Aquidneck, or The Island of Rhode Island, which instead of being independent was thus implied to be a part of Providence. What our predecessors on this Island thought of that we are not told, but the slight acquaintance with human nature would suggest a feeling of irritation and antagonism on their part, for Newport was larger at that time than Providence and more influential. This may have caused the delay in acting under the charter which would require them to acknowledge the use of this name, and as we shall see later when John Clarke brought his charter back from England the inhabitants of this island had their revenge in the name which was then given to the colony.

Another hint regarding the cause of trouble may be found in the differences known to exist between William Coddington and the others. From the beginning of the settlement at Portsmouth until this year, when the government was organized under the charter, Coddington

had every year been elected President of Rhode Island, now for the first time he saw himself put in second place and John Coggeshall in the first. And although the next year Coddington was again elected President, there were evidently disturbances in connection with his relation to the community, for at the very time that he was thus elected we find the following record: "It is ordered that whereas there are divers bills of complaint exhibited against Mr. Coddington who was elected President, that if the President-elect be found guilty, or being cleared of such charges refuse the place, that then the assistant of Newport, to wit, Mr. Jeremy Clarke, shall be invested in his place." This suggested matter of bills of complaint would imply that the trouble had gone pretty far in Coddington's relation to others, nor was he conciliatory, for we are told from the records, "That the President-elect did not attend the court for the clearance of the accusations charged upon him."

It would appear also that Coddington was not pleased with the patent which Williams had obtained nor of the relations with Warwick where Gorton was a constant source of trouble.

Palfrey also remarks that Coddington was in favour of the royalists in England, while Clarke and Easton, the leaders of the dominant party on the island, were strongly republican. It is known also that a short time before this Coddington also had, in conjunction with Captain Partridge, sent a letter to The Confederacy of the other New England Colonies from which Rhode Island had hitherto kept aloof. This letter contained a request as follows, that, "We, the islanders of Rhode Island... may be received into the combination with all the united colonies of New England in a prime and perpetual league of friendship and amity, of offence and defence, mutual advice and succor upon all just occasions for our mutual safety and welfare, and for preserving of peace amongst ourselves, and preventing as much as may be all occasion of war and difference, and to this on motion, we have the consent of the major part of our island." This was a startling state-paper to be presented by two who claimed to represent the majority. Whether they did or not, it was plainly evidence of a strong feeling on the part of Coddington that something

should be done to remedy existing evils. The Commissioners of the other Colonies in their reply refused the request.

It is evident that the mind of Coddington was greatly disturbed, and the result of these various matters upon him was his departure to England, which occurred the following January.

And now with Coddington in London, persuaded in his own mind that the Colony would run upon the rocks, and seeking some way by which it might be steered into harbour, we have the scene laid for the entrance into Rhode Island's history of this remarkable document which is the particular object of our paper.

On the 30th of January, King Charles the First was beheaded and the whole government in England went into the hands of Parliament. Coddington proceeded to make friends with the governing powers, and although we are ignorant of just what transpired, we are in no more uncertainty than were the people at home to whom news came of Coddington's having some strange design, and the Colony was much disturbed. Two years passed while Coddington was in London, the Parliament of England being so intent upon more important matters as not to concern itself with this little Colony of Rhode Island. What means he pursued we do not know, but in April, 1661, he obtained from the Council of State this commission signed by John Bradshaw, the President, authorizing him to govern the Island of Rhode Island and Conanicut, with a council of six men to be named by the people and approved by himself.

COMMISSION TO WILLIAM CODDINGTON AS GOVERNOR OF THE ISLANDS OF AQUIDNECK AND CONANICUT

Whereas by a late act of Parliament of the 3d of October, it is granted to the Council of State to have power and authority over all such Islands and all other places in America as have been planted at the cost, and settled by the people and Authority of this nation. And there or in any of the said Islands and Places to institute Governors and to grant Commission

or Commissions to such Person or Persons as they shall think fit, and to do all just things and to use all lawful means for the benefit and preservation of the said Plantations and Islands, in peace and safety until the Parliament shall take over and further order therein. Any letters Pattente or other Authority formerly granted or given to the contrary notwithstanding.

And whereas William Coddington, Esq., at the great hazard, cost, and charges of himself and others, did about the year 1637 resolve to plant or set down upon Aquidneck, alias Rhode Island, and Qunnungate, being islands inhabited and frequented by the Indians, lying within the Narragansett Bay in the Northern part of America, and did for valuable consideration purchase the said Island of and from the two chief Sachems of the Narragansetts and of the neighboring Sachems of South Ancett; and of and from the two petty Sachems of the said Island with the consent of the Native people thereof, wherein the said William Coddington and others have ever since been and now are in quiet and peaceable possession and seizure.

Forasmuch also as the said William Coddington aforesaid and others are desirous to go on in the populating and planting of the said Islands and to put themselves and the said Islands under the protection of this State; and to hold and enjoy the same by and under the grant, power and authority of this Nation and State of England. The said Council for the better encouragement of the said adventurers, and carrying on so good a work, reposing confidence in the abilities, wisdom, faithfulness and good affection of you, the said William Coddington, do by these presents make and constitute you to be Governor of the said Islands, hereby giving and granting unto you, the said

William Coddington, full power and authority to take upon you the office and exercise of the Government of the said Islands, and to cause equal and indifferent justice to be duly administered to all the good people in the said Islands inhabiting, according to the law established in this land, as far as the Constitution of those places will permit; and in the name of the Keepers of the Liberties of England by Authority of Parliament and to use and observe the same and no other form or stile in all Commissions, Writings, Deputations, Instructions, and in all other legal and civil proceedings, but according to the forms directed by this present Parliament, since the Abolishing of Kingship and Alteration of Government.

And you are further to raise forces for defence; and execute and do all other just things and use all lawful means to settle, improve and preserve the said Islands in peace and safety until the Parliament shall take other and further order therein, into whom or to the Council you are to give an account of your proceedings, from tyme to tyme, and to present as things emerge, what you conceive to be for the good of the said Islands and for the advantage and interest of this Commonwealth in the well ordering and disposing of the same.

Moreover you, the said William Coddington, after your entrance upon the government of the said Islands, are to call unto yourself, for the better discharge of your office and government, a council consisting of Persons rightfully qualified for judgment and good affection to the interest of this commonwealth, not exceeding the number of six, after the manner hereafter set down and expressed, viz: That the said Persons shall be nominated by such freeholders of the towns of Newport and Portsmouth within the said Islands as shall be well affected to the government of this Common-

wealth, according to your instructions, and the Act in that case provided, and afterwards chosen and confirmed by you, the said Governor, which said Persons so nominated and afterwards chosen by you, the said Governor as aforesaid, or any three, or more of them, shall sit in council and all to be assisting unto you in the affaires belonging to your trust, until that tyme twelve months, at which tyme a new Election is to be made as aforesaid and so annually.

And you have hereby power and are authorized to tender the Engagement in these words: "I doe declare and promise that I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now established without a King or House of Lords, to those who shall be from tyme to tyme elected as aforesaid to be of your said Councell;" which Engagement they are to subscribe before they act anything as Councillors as aforesaid to be of your said Councell; and you are also to tender the said Engagement to all those who by this present Commission are to have a voyce in the said Election who have not first subscribed the said Engagement. The said Persons or Councell are hereby also authorized in case of your absence or death, to make choice of some other fit person, qualified as aforesaid, to succeed you in the Government until the Parliament or Council of State shall give further order therein, care being taken always by yourself and Councell, that the Interests of this Commonwealth be preserved according to the just and true meaning of the powers, herewith to you given.

Signed in the name and by order of the Councell of State appointed by the Authority of Parliament.

JOHN BRADSHAW,

President.

Whitehall, April 1651,
Of the Councell.

Of Coddington's intentions we need not be too critical. He certainly thought he saw the decadence, if not the destruction, of this Colony to which he was so strongly devoted, and like many other strong men felt that he was the Moses who was to lead this Israel out of Egypt.

We may safely concede him to have been the leader and the most influential man in the Colony.

But when this Commission first made its appearance in Newport it created a much greater excitement than its presence in our archives creates today. The towns of Providence and Warwick were called together in an assembly, and being in fear as to what effect this commission might have upon the charter under which they were then living, they urged Roger Williams to leave home and attempt to obtain from Parliament a ratification of that former charter. In the meantime, they determined to act under it as though the Commission to Coddington had nothing to do with them.

In the towns of Newport and Portsmouth still greater excitement prevailed. Arnold tells us that in that same month, "Forty-one of the inhabitants of Portsmouth, and sixty-five, being nearly all of the freemen, in Newport, joined to persuade Dr. Clarke to go out and obtain a repeal of Coddington's commission." And Williams and Clarke sailed together for London. This was in October. The following September a letter from Mr. Williams was received at Providence, saying that the Council had granted leave to the colony to go on under the charter until the controversy was settled, and in October the Council issued an order vacating the commission of Coddington and directing all the towns to unite under the charter.

One year later, in May, 1653, Mr. Coddington upon demand refused to surrender the statute book and records, saying he had received no order from England to resign his commission. Matters remained in such an unsettled state of difficulty between the towns and also between them and Coddington, that in July, 1654, Roger Williams returned, leaving Clarke in England. Finally, in May, 1656, Mr. Coddington having been elected commissioner from Newport, an investigation was had by the Assembly, and Coddington submitted as follows:

"I, William Coddington, doe hereby submit to the authoritie of His Highness in this Colonie as it is now united, and that with all my heart."

Thus ended his claim to the life-governorship.

In 1663 the General Court of Commissioners convened at Newport to receive the results of the labors of John Clarke in England, the Royal Charter of Charles II, with the following ceremony.

"At a very great meeting and assembly of the freemen of the colony of Providence Plantations, at Newport, in Rhode Island, in New England, November the 24th, 1663. The abovesayd Assembly being legally called and orderly mett for the sollome reception of his Majesty's gracious letters pattent unto them sent, and having in order thereto chosen the President, Benedict Arnold, Moderator of the Assembly," it was, "Voted: That the box in which the King's gracious letters were enclosed be opened, and the letters with the broad seal thereto affixed be taken forth and read by Captayne George Baxter in the audience and view of all the people; which was accordingly done, and the sayd letters with his Majesty's Royall Stampe, and the broad seal, with much becoming gravity held up on hygh, and presented to the perfect view of the people, and then returned into the box and locked up by the Governor, in order to the safe keeping of it."

This remarkable document, a monument to the efficiency and loyalty of John Clarke, was as follows:

CHARLES THE SECOND, (&c.) . . . :

WHEREAS WEE have been informed, by the humble petition of our trustie and well beloved subject, John Clarke, on the behalfe of Benjamin Arnold, William Brenton, William Coddington, Nicholas Easton, William Boulston, John Porter, John Smith, Samuell Groton, John Weeks, Roger Williams, Thomas Olnie, Gregorie Dexter, John Coggeshall, Joseph Clarke, Randall Holden, John Greene, John Roome, Samuell Wildbore, William Fifield, James Barker, Richard Tew, Thomas Harris, and William Dyre, and the rest of the purchasers and ffree inhabitants of our island, called RHODE ISL-

AND, and the rest of the colonie of Providence Plantations, in the Narragansett Bay, in New England, in America, that they, pursueing with peaceable and loyall mindes, their sober, serious and religious intentions, of godlie edifieing themselves, and one another, in the holie Christian ffaith and worshipp as they were perswaded: together with the gaineing over and conversione of the poore ignorant Indian natives, in those partes of America, to the sincere professione and obedience of the same ffaith and worship, did, not onlie by the consent and good-encouragement of our royall progenitors, transport themselves out of this kindome of England into America, but alsoe, since their arrivall there, after their first settlement amongst other our subjects in those parts, ffor the avoideing of discorde, and those manie evills which were likely to ensue upon some of those oure subjects not being able to beare, in these remote partes, their different apprehensions in religious concernments, and in pursueance of the afforesayd ends, did once againe leave their desireable stationes and habitationes, and with excessive labor and travell, hazard and charge, did transplant themselves into the midst of the Indian natives, who, as wee are informed, are the most potent princes and people of all that country; where, by the good Providence of God, from whome the Plantations have taken their name, upon their labour and industrie, they have not onlie byn preserved to admiration, but have increased and prospered, and are seized and possessed, by purchase and consent of the said natives, to their ffull content, of such lands, islands, rivers, harbours, and roades, as are verie convenient, both for plantationes and alsoe for buildinge of shippes, suplye of pype-staves, and other merchandize; and which lyves verie commodious, in manie respects, for

commerce, and to accommodate oure southern plantationes, and may much advance the trade of this oure realme, and greatlie enlarge the territories thereof, they haveinge, by neare neighbourhoode to and friendlie societie with the greate bodie of the Narragansett Indians, given them encouragement, of their own accorde, to subject themselves, their people and lands, unto us; whereby, as is hoped, there may, in due tyme, by the blessing of God upon their endeavours, bee layd a sure ffoundation of happiness to all America: AND WHEREAS in their humble addresse, they have ffreely declared, that it is much on their hearts (if they may be permitted), to hold forth a livelie experiment, that a most flourishing civill state may stand and best bee maintained, and that among our English subjects, with a full libertie in religious concernments; and that true piety rightly grounded upon gospell principles, will give the best and greatest security to sovereignty, and will lay in the hearts of men the strongest obligations to true loyaltye: NOW KNOW YEE, that wee, beinge willinge to encourage the hopefull undertakinge of oure sayd loyall and loveinge subjects, and to secure them in the free exercise and enjoyment of all their civill and religious rights, appertaining to them, as our loveinge subjects; and to preserve unto them that libertye, in the true Christian ffaith and worshipp of God, which they have sought with soe much travaill, and with peaceable myndes, and loyall subjectione to our royall progenitors and ourselves, to enjoye; and because some of the people and inhabitants of the same colonie cannot, in their private opinions, conforme to the publique exercise of religion, according to the litturgy, formes and ceremonyes of the Church of England, or take or subscribe the oaths and articles made and established in that behalfe; and for that the

same, by reason of the remote distances of those places, will (as wee hope) bee noe breach of the unitie and unifformitie established in this nation: . . . doe hereby . . . declare, That our royall will and pleasure is, that noe person within the sayd colonye, at any tyme hereafter, shall bee any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinione in matters of religion, and doe not actually disturb the civill peace of our sayd colony; but that all and everye person and persons may, from tyme to tyme, and at all tymes hereafter freelye and fullye have and enjoye his and their owne judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concerns, throughout the tract of lande hereafter mentioned: they behaving themselves peaceable and quietlie, and not using this libertie to lycentiousnesse and profaneness, nor to the civill injurye or outward disturbance of others; any lawe, statute, or clause, therein containyd, or to bee containyd, usage or custome of this realme, to the contrary hereof, in any wise, notwithstanding. And that they may bee in the better capacity to defend themselves, in their just rights and libertyes against all the enemies of the Christian ffaith, and others, in all respects, wee . . . further . . . declare, That they shall have and enjoye the benefitt of our late act of indempnity and ffree pardon, as the rest of our subjects in other our dominions and territoryes have; and to create and make them a body politique or corporate, with the powers and privileges hereinafter mentioned. And accordingly . . . wee . . . doe ordeyne, constitute and declare, That they, the sayd William Brenton . . . (and others) . . . and all such others as now are, or hereafter shall be admitted and made ffree of the company and societie of our collonie of Providence Plantations, in the Narragansett Bay, in New Eng-

land, shall bee, from tyme to tyme, and forever hereafter, a bodie corporate and politique, . . . by the name of THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY OF THE ENGLISH COLLONIE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS, IN NEW ENGLAND, IN AMERICA. . . . AND FURTHER, wee. . . . doe declare. . . . that. . . . there shall bee one Governour, one Deputie-Governour and ten Assistants, to bee from tyme to tyme. . . . chosen, out of the freemen of the sayd Company, for the tyme beinge, in such manner and fforme as is hereafter in these presents expressed; . . . And wee doe. . . . apoynt the aforesaid Benedict Arnold to bee the first and present Governor of the sayd Company, and the sayd William Brenton to bee the Deputy-Governor, and the sayd William Boulston, John Porter, Roger Williams, Thomas Olnie, John Smith, John Greene, John Coggeshall, James Barker, William Ffield, and Joseph Clarke, to bee the ten present Assistants of the sayd Companye. . . . AND FURTHER, wee. . . . doe ordeyne. . . . that the Governor of the sayd Companye, for the tyme being, or, in his absence, . . . the Deputy-Governor, . . . shall and may, ffrom tyme to tyme, upon all occasions, give order ffor the assemblinge of the sayd Company, and callinge them together, to consult and advise of the businesse and affaires of the sayd Company. AND THAT forever hereafter, twice in every year, that is to say, on every first Wednesday in the month of May, and on every last Wednesday in October, or oftener, in case it shall bee requisite, the Assistants, and such of the ffreemen of the Companye, not exceeding six persons ffor Newport, ffoure persons ffor each of the respective townes of Providence, Portsmouth, and Warwicke, and two persons for each other place, towne or city, whoe shall bee, from tyme to tyme, thereunto elected or deputed by the

majour parte of the ffreemen of the respective townes or places ffor which they shall bee so elected or deputed, shall have a generall meetinge, or Assembly then and there to consult, advise and determine, in and about the affaires and businesse of the said Company and Plantations. AND FURTHER, wee doe . . . graunt unto the sayd Governour and Company . . . that the Governour . . . (or Deputy-Governor) . . . the Assistants, and such of the ffreemen of the sayd Company as shall bee soe as aforesayd elected or deputed, or soe many of them as shall bee present att such meetings or assemblye, as aforesayde, shall bee called the Generall Assemblye; and that they, or the greatest parte of them present, whereof the Governor or Deputy-Governor, and sixe of the Assistants, at least to bee seven, shall have . . . full power (and) authority . . . to appoynt, alter and change, such dayes, tymes and places of meetinge and Generall Assemblye, as theye shall thinke ffitt; AND FURTHER . . . wee doe . . . ordeyne, that yearelie . . . the aforesayd Wednesday in May, and at the towne of Newport, or elsewhere, if urgent occasion doe require, the Governour, Deputy-Governour and Assistants of the sayd Company, and other officers of the sayd Company, or such of them as the Generall Assemblye shall thinke ffitt, shall bee, in the sayd Generall Court or Assembly to bee held from that day or tyme, newly chosen for the year ensuing, by such greater part of the sayd Company, for the tyme beinge, as shall bee then and there present; . . . Neverthelessse, our will and pleasure is, and wee doe hereby declare to the rest of our Collonies in New England, that itt shall not bee lawefull ffor this our sayd Collony . . . to invade the natives inhabitating within the boundes and limitts of their sayd Collonies without the knowledge and consent of the sayd other Col-

lonies. And itt is hereby declared, that itt shall not bee lawfull to or ffor the rest of the Colonies to invade or molest the native Indians, or any other inhabitants, inhabiting within the bounds and lynmitts hereafter mentioned (they having subjected themselves unto us, and being by us taken into our speciall protection), without the knowledge and consent of the Governor and Company of our Collony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.... And further, know ye, that wee...doe give, graunt and confirme, unto the sayd Governour and Company, and their successors, all that parte of our dominions in New-England, in America, contayneing the Nahantick and Nanhyganset Bay, and countreyes and partes adjacent, bounded on the west, or westerly, to the middle or channel of a river there, commonly called and known by the name of Pawcatuck, alias Pawcawtuck river, and along the sayd river, as the greater or middle streame thereof reacheth or lyes vpp into the north countrey, northward unto the head thereof, and from thence, by a streight lyne drawne due north, untill itt meets with the south lyne of the Massachusetts Colonie; and on the north, or northerly, by the aforesayd south or southerly lyne of the Massachusetts Collony or Plantation, and extending towards the east, or eastwardly, three English miles to the east and northeast of the most eastern and northeastern parts of the aforesayd Narragansett Bay, as the sayd Bay lyeth or extendeth itself from the ocean on the south, or southwardly, unto the mouth of the river which runneth towards the towne of Providence, and from thence along the eastwardly side or banke of the sayd river (higher called by the name of Sea-cunck river), up to the ffals called Patuckett ffals, being the most westwardly lyne of Plymouth Collony, and soe from the sayd ffals,

in a streight lyne, due north, untill itt meete with the aforesayd lyne of the Massachusetts Collony; and bounded on the south by the ocean; and in particular, the lands belonging to the townes of Providence, Pawtuxet, Warwicke, Misquammacok, alias Pawcatuck, and the rest upon the maine land in the tract aforesaid, together with Rhode-Island, Block-Island, and all the rest of the islands and banks in the Narragansett Bay, and bordering upon the coast of the tract, aforesayd, (Fisher's Island only excepted), . . . any graunt, or clause in a late graunt, to the Governour and Company of Connecticut Collony, in America, to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding. . . . AND FURTHER, our will and pleasure is, that in all matters of public controversy which may fall out betweene our Collony of Providence Plantations, and the rest of our Collonies in New-England, itt shall and may bee lawfull to and for the Governour and Company of the sayd Collony of Providence Plantations to make their appeals therein to us. . . ., for redresse in such cases, within this our realme of England: and that itt shall be lawfull to and for the inhabitants of the sayd Collony. . . ., without let or molestation, to passe and repasse with freedom, into and through the rest of the English Collonies, upon their lawfull and civill occasions, and to converse, and hold commerce and trade, with such of the inhabitants of our other English Collonies as shall be willing to admitt them thereunto, they haveing themselves peaceably among them. . . . ”

The Colony progressed and throve for almost two hundred years under this charter, which remained the fundamental law of the “Colony” and later the “State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations” until the adoption of the State Constitution in 1842. Had it not been for the mistaken effort on the part of Coddington in obtain-

ing his commission there might have been no such hurry to secure this royal charter, or such effort to make it completely satisfactory to the independent self governing colonists. So that perhaps after all that most interesting commission which at the time caused such anxiety and distress to the people of our Island may have been the means of forwarding and not retarding the great principle of free government of which our charter and our State have ever been the leading exponents.

THE LOG OF THE LAWRENCE

A Paper Read Before the Society February 19th, 1923, by the Librarian

One hundred and ten years ago a splendid patriotic fervor was astir in the bosoms of several young men of old Newport. Born on the shores of Narragansett Bay, amphibious by nature and desire, their chosen field of activity was the sea; and they were sailors by instinct and predestination even before they had actually trodden the deck of a deep water ship, or grasped with yet unhardened hands the rough cordage that hoisted, set and trimmed to the varying breezes the great sails whose supremacy as the motive power of navigation was as yet unimpaired by the uncertain dawn of steam.

Of these youths the presiding spirit was Oliver Hazard Perry, who had chosen the navy for his profession, had already distinguished himself by brilliant service in foreign waters, and was at this time in command of a flotilla of gun-boats stationed at Newport. Chafing under the inactivity of this duty, and yearning for the opportunities for advancement which the struggle for the control of the Great Lakes seemed to offer, Perry solicited and obtained a transfer from Newport to the naval base at Sackett's Harbour, then under the command of Commodore Chauncey.

Strongly illustrative of the true patriotism of those days are the circumstances attending the departure of Commander Perry from Newport. He had been in the enjoyment of what might be termed a comfortable little command—this snug little squadron of gun-boats safely at anchor in one of the finest harbours in the world—a brilliant record of service already to look back upon, and the consciousness of doing at the present time all that was demanded or ex-

pected of him. But besides all these good and adequate reasons for professional peace of mind and contentment there was a still more powerful motive to hold him fast, as with the anchor that was the symbol of his native state, to the shores of Narragansett Bay. He was married—recently and most happily married—and a little son was already being taught by his adoring mother to watch with welcoming eyes for the home-coming of husband and father, whenever official duty sanctioned that most natural indulgence. Moreover, Winter held Newport in its grasp; and the home fireside was a snug and delightful spot to return to, when the day's task was ended. Comparisons are odious, but, secretly, we cannot help wondering whether many of our young benedicts of today would have torn themselves from the restraining arms of wife and child, to set out in the grim rigors of our New England Winter for a vague goal in a semi-wilderness merely for the sake of country and renown.

From earliest childhood the peculiar charm of Perry's personality had impressed all those who came in contact with him. And now that he had become a leader of men, the same magnetic influence seemed to inspire in his followers a devotion such as was ascribed to the troops who served under the great Napoleon. When it became known that their commander had been ordered to another station, the crews of the flotilla of gun-boats in Newport harbour, volunteered, or, rather, clamored to be permitted to accompany him. Perry selected from the best and fittest of the number one hundred and fifty men, and on the seventeenth of February, 1813, he dispatched a detachment of fifty men, under command of Sailing-Master Almy, on the long road through the wilderness to Sackett's Harbour. Does not this name, Almy, bring this epic of Perry close home to us? Does it not strongly help us to realize that this expedition, hastily organized, was composed of young men, little older than our High School graduates of to-day, taken from under the roof-trees of our quaint old Newport dwellings? A second force of the same number, fifty, was sent forward on the nineteenth, under the command of Sailing-Master Champlin; and on the twenty-first the final detachment was dispatched, in command of Sailing-Master

Taylor. On the twenty-second, Washington's Birthday, Perry himself started on the long trail. Almy, Champlin, Taylor, Perry,—was ever a great achievement, destined for glorious immortality more completely monopolized by one little Colonial town? And the boys who followed these Newport leaders with confidence and enthusiasm, over frozen streams, through dense forests, on foot, in the biting cold of a long and severe winter, sang and shouted for joy, as they romped along, and termed the journey a "land cruise."

William V. Taylor, the sailing-master placed in charge of the third and last detachment of men sent out from Newport, is the man who wrote the greater part of this record of occurrences on board the U. S. Sloop of War LAWRENCE, which, under the title of THE LOG OF THE LAWRENCE, we hold as one of our most valuable historic relics. Taylor served as Perry's sailing-master during the progress of the famous battle, and he was one of the officers left on board the disabled LAWRENCE, when Perry transferred his flag from her to the NIAGARA. The duties of a sailing master in those days parallel closely those of a chief engineer in our times; for they consisted in making (setting) shortening, and trimming sail, and manoeuvring the ship, just as the control of the engines today augments or diminishes the vessel's speed, stops her altogether, and starts her again upon her course. There is, however, this very great difference between them; the sailing-master was on deck, exposed to all the dangers of the combatants, while the chief engineer's duties are performed within great walls of steel, which exclude the nerve-racking din and tumult of the conflict while minimizing the personal danger of its effects.

It would appear that no measure of praise could be too great to bestow upon our hero, Perry. He started from Newport on the 22nd of February, 1813. Exactly two hundred days later he vanquished the British fleet. It is difficult to realize the fact that all, or practically all the vessels under his command during that action, were built, equipped and manned within that brief space of less than seven months. And it was Perry's indomitable will, his energy, his efficiency, and above all his patriotic fervor, his

yearning to be foremost in flinging back from the boundaries of his beloved country the hordes of ruthless invaders who had invoked the aid of savages with knife and tomahawk to augment the terrors of a cruel and devastating warfare, that overcame all obstacles of time and space, and led to his immortal achievement. And this hero was but twenty-seven years of age.

The whole story of Perry's experiences, between the time of his setting forth from Newport and the moment when, the noise of battle ceased, his pencil traced the famous words: "We have met the Enemy and they are ours," is one of a long, up-hill climb, a ceaseless conflict with tremendous odds. More than once his bodily strength yielded to the struggle. Fever laid him low, fatigue overwhelmed him. But always his spirit, aflame like the sacred fire on the altar of patriotism, scorning the ills of the flesh, spurred him upward and onward to fresh endeavour. It is not inconceivable that however unconsciously, Perry was actually sacrificing his young life in this bitter struggle; for the terrific drain at this time on his physical powers, may have been a contributing cause of his untimely death, which occurred only six years later.

Nothing went easily. After the ships had been built, the forest trees having been felled for their construction, and the work having been done almost on the very spot marked by their prostrate trunks, it was found impossible to float them over the bar of sand that protected the little harbour of Erie, into the deeper water of the lake. Even this mechanical problem was solved, in part at least, by the astute mind of Perry. Pontoons were constructed, which, placed under the ships, raised them until their keels were a few inches clear of the sands of the bar. And while this tedious operation was in progress, the enemy fleet, under Commodore Barclay, hovered in the offing, as it were daring the young American commander to come out and give them battle. Day after day these torments of Tantalus were renewed; and when at last Perry's ships were actually afloat on the lake, the enemy had for the time being disappeared.

It is interesting to note the dimensions of the principal vessels of Perry's squadron, in a comparison with sailing vessels of our time. The two brigs, the LAWRENCE and the

NIAGARA, were what is known as "sister ships;" they were the same in size and rig and general form of construction, as also in weight and quality of armament. They were 141 feet in length over all, 30 feet beam, and of 480 tons burthen; their draught, laden and equipped, was about nine feet. They carried from 135 to 150 men each, and their armament consisted of twenty guns, 18 short 32-pounders, and two long 12-pounders each. In April and early May, if we step down to the end of one of our wharves, overlooking the inner harbour, we can see many a beautiful Gloucester fishing schooner at anchor there, which in size is about the same as Perry's biggest fighting ship.

On the sixth of August Perry got his whole squadron underway and stood across the lake for a point on the Canadian shore behind which he expected to find the enemy fleet. But they were not there, and the squadron returned to Erie. On the twelfth another departure was effected, Perry's squadron cruising, in battle formation, toward the northern end of the lake. The harassing circumstances which had attended the expedition from the very start, still obtained. Much sickness prevailed among both men and officers, so severe in many cases as to render its victims altogether unfit for duty. Perry himself was stricken down and confined for a whole week to his berth.

Dr. Parsons, the medical officer on board the LAWRENCE, was himself attacked by the malignant disease, and became so enfeebled that he could not stand upon his feet. But animated apparently by the same unconquerable spirit that possessed his beloved commander, the brave officer had himself carried, on a stretcher, to the deck, and lying there, he examined and prescribed for the disabled seamen who were borne, likewise on stretchers, to his side.

Prominent among the features of discouragement which had confronted the expedition ever since the building of the ships had been commenced, was the lack of able-bodied, trained seamen to man them. It was but a motley assemblage, indeed, that trod the decks of the LAWRENCE and the other vessels of the squadron. They were raw hands, for the most part, who had been whipped into discipline and training, so to speak, by the eternal application and energy and vigilance of their commander, in the brief space

of a few weeks. The original band of hardy adventurers which had started from Newport, had been broken into fragments by the force of circumstances. Some of them had been requisitioned to the immediate service of Commodore Chauncey, on Lake Ontario; others had dropped out altogether, illness had eliminated many. And now disease was rampant among the crews which, even in the fullness of health and strength, had been deemed inadequate for the great purpose in view.

So constant, and of such volume, was the torrent of adverse circumstances which Perry was heroically endeavouring to overcome, that, had he been superstitious, he might have imagined the Quaker traditions of his ancestors, which condemn the use of the sword, as animating the forces arrayed against him.

The British squadron, which Perry had hoped to discover behind the shelter of Long Point, on the Canadian shore, had moved thence to the great naval base of Malden, where the guns of a powerful fortress afforded ample protection. Perry, undaunted by the deterring conditions prevailing in his own fleet—sickness, short-handedness, and insufficiency of training—availed himself of favoring winds, and bore down upon the entrance to the harbour in which the enemy had taken refuge. There for several days he stood off and on, blockading the port and flaunting bold defiance in the face of the enemy; a counter-challenge to that delivered ten days previously by the British off the harbour of Erie, while Perry's biggest ships were still imprisoned behind the sand bar. But Commodore Barclay, in command of the British squadron, was himself laboring under a conviction of unreadiness for combat; he wished to await the completion of a powerful ship, the DETROIT, which was almost prepared to become a valuable addition to his fighting force. A change of wind which rendered Perry's proximity to the enemy harbour precarious, determined the raising of the blockade and another fruitless return to Erie.

Thus, in this weary pastime of shilly-shallying—of flirtation with death and destruction—a period of feverish anxiety and baffled hope rolled slowly by. At last—on the evening of September 9th, Barclay set sail, and with his

whole squadron, including the new DETROIT, moved out from under the protecting batteries of Malden, into the open waters of the lake.

On the tenth of September, at daybreak, the look-out at the masthead of the LAWRENCE descried the upper sails of the British fleet on the horizon line. Perry immediately got underway and proceeded under easy sail in their direction.

Our LOG now takes up the story:

Friday, 10th. Sept., 1813.

Commences fresh breezes from the westward and cloudy. Variously employed making up grape, etc. Middle part fresh breezes and pleasant. At daylight discovered the enemy's fleet in the N. W. Made the signal immediately to the squadron to get underway. At 6 A. M. the squadron all underway working out to windward of Snake Island to keep the weather gauge. Wind at S. W. At 7 discovered the whole of the enemy's squadron—viz., two ships, two brigs, one schooner, one sloop with their larboard tacks aboard to the Westward, about ten miles distant. At ten cleared away Snake Island and formed in order of battle, LAWRENCE ahead, bore up for the enemy and called all hands to quarters. At a quarter before Meridian the enemy commenced the action at about one mile distant. Ordered the Scorpion, who was on our weather bow, to fire on the enemy, the LAWRENCE endeavouring to close with them as fast as possible, and at Meridian commenced the action on our part.

Ends light winds and fair weather—sea smooth. West Sister two miles to the Southward and Westward.

At half past Meridian within musket shot of the enemy's new ship DETROIT. At this time they opened a most destructive fire on the LAWRENCE from their whole squadron. Continued to near them as fast as possible. At half past one P. M. so entirely disabled that we could work the brig no longer. Called the men from the tops and marines to man the guns. At this time our braces, bowlines, sheets and in fact almost every strand of rigging cut off, masts and spars cut through in various places. At 2 P. M. most of the guns dismounted, breechings gone, carriages knocked to

pieces. Called the few surviving men from the first division to man the guns aft. At half past 2 P. M., when not another gun could be fired or worked from the LAWRENCE, Capt. Perry determined on leaving her. He took some hands in the first cutter and went on board the NIAGARA. About ten minutes after Capt. Perry got on board the NIAGARA, Lieutenants Yarnell and Forrest and Sailing-Master Taylor concluded as no further resistance could be made from this brig and to save the further effusion of human blood, agreed to haul down our colors. Immediately after Capt. Perry took charge of the NIAGARA all possible sail was made to close with the enemy and in fifteen minutes Capt. Perry past through the British squadron having the DETROIT, QUEEN CHARLOTTE and a brig on the starboard side and a brig on the larboard, and silenced their fire. Ten minutes before 3 P. M. they hauled down their colours. The two small vessels attempted to escape but were overhauled and struck their colours. A few minutes past 3 the firing ceased when the whole fleet was brought to anchor. Employed through the night securing prisoners and repairing rigging, etc. At 9 A. M. weighed with the whole fleet and stood for Put-In-Bay. At Meridian came to in 5 fathoms water. Winds light and Westerly.

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In order to throw further light upon the conditions prevailing in Perry's squadron a few days before and a few days after the great battle, we quote from the Log as follows:

Saturday, Sept. 4, 1813.

Commences fresh breezes and flying clouds. Last evening Lieutenant Turner was ordered to take command of the Caledonia. Variously employed about the rigging, receiving stores on board, etc. Ariel ordered to the east point of the bay. At 5 P. M. exercised great guns. At 2 P. M. Ariel returned and anchored, bringing some potatoes, green corn, etc. Midnight moderate and pleasant. At half past 4 A. M. saw a small sail in the W. N. W. Ordered the Ariel to chase. It proved to be an American coasting sloop. Latter part

gentle breezes and pleasant. Employed stowing hold, reeving yard and stay tackles and various other jobs. Niagara's first cutter came alongside with two bullocks. Twenty-seven men unfit for duty by the surgeon's report.

Sunday, Sept. 5.

Commences light westerly breezes and pleasant weather. Scorpion ordered down to the east point of the bay. At 5 P. M. exercised great guns. Otherwise variously employed. At 10 P. M. Scorpion returned and anchored. Middle part gentle breezes and fine weather. At 11 P. M. called all hands to muster. Latter part light winds, weather pleasant. Twenty-four men unfit for duty by the surgeon's report. Last evening the Ohio sailed for Erie.

Monday, Sept. 6.

Commences gentle breezes and fine weather. At 1 P. M. first cutter returned from Seneca with letters, papers, etc. A boat came alongside with potatoes, corn, bread, beef, beans, etc. It proved a very seasonable supply to us. A canoe with three men from Malden came alongside and were separately examined. Middle part light variable winds and fair weather. Considerable current from the N. W. Hove in the cable. At 8 A. M. crossed top-gallant yards. Received from the shore two bullocks and some potatoes which were distributed among the squadron. Variously employed on the rigging, fitting grape shot, and flying jib for the Scorpion, hammocks, etc. Ends gentle breezes and fair weather. Exercised great guns by divisions. Twenty-two men unfit for duty by the surgeon's report.

Tuesday, 7 Sept.

Commences light winds and pleasant weather. At 1 P. M. made the preparative for the squadron to get underway. At 2 P. M. got underway with the squadron and stood for Put-in-Bay. At half-past 4 P. M. passed between Middle Bass Island and Ballou's Island. At 5 came to in Put-In-Bay in 5 fathoms water. At quarter past five squadron all safe at anchor. Sent first cutter fishing, but caught none. Middle part gentle breezes and cloudy. At 5 A. M. called all hands to wash and scrub hammocks, bags and clothes. Sent first

cutter for ballast, and second cutter fishing. Latter part light winds and cloudy. Variously employed, carpenter fitting top-gallant mast. Fitting grape shot. Sailmaker making flying-jib for Scorpion. Exercised guns by divisions. Seventeen men unfit for duty by the surgeon's report.

Wednesday, 8 Sept.

Commences light winds and cloudy. Took on board about three tons stone ballast and one boat load of wood. At 5 P. M. beat to quarters and exercised great guns and small arms. At 8 P. M. weather of a threatening appearance. Gave her 15 fathoms more of cable. Middle part dark weather and constant rain. Latter part fresh breezes and thick weather with rain. Variously employed fitting grape, reeving preventer braces, etc. Nineteen men unfit for duty by the surgeon's report, exclusive of officers.

Thursday, 9 Sept.

Commences fresh breezes and thick weather with light rain. At 4 P. M. sent first cutter fishing. Middle part strong variable winds and rain. At 9 A. M. sent first cutter fishing. Latter part fresh breezes with flying clouds. Variously employed. Carpenter fitting new topmast. Gunners fitting grape and tubes. Sailmaker on flying-jib for Scorpion and hammocks, etc., etc. General order issued for boiling water previously to its being used. Twenty-nine people on board unfit for duty by the surgeon's report. I have hitherto mentioned only the binnacle list, which does not include the officers sick.

Sunday, 12th Sept.

Commences light westerly winds and fair weather. Employed with some hands from the other vessels fishing our masts, two lower yards, main boom. Got down top-gallant yards, mast and rigging, flying jib-boom. Cleaning ship and taking care of the sick and wounded. Fresh breezes from the west through the night. At 5 A. M. blowing quite a gale. Veered out 40 fathoms cable and struck lower yards. Variously employed clearing our decks, attending the wounded and sick. Buried the deceased officers, American and English, with the honours of war. Ends moderate

breezes and pleasant. Strong Current from the east. In consequence of the gale this morning the Queen Charlotte struck adrift and got foul of the Detroit. All their masts being nearly cut off in the engagement, they fell by the board—except the Queen's foremast.

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The document in which all these events are recorded is called: "Occurrences and Remarks on Board the U. S. Sloop of War Lawrence of Twenty Guns . . . O. H. Perry, Esq., Commander."

Subsequent entries show that the LAWRENCE was used directly after the battle to convey the sick and wounded from Put-In-Bay to Erie. The brave ship was eventually sold and broken up.

SOCIETY NOTES

One of our best friends, Mr. T. T. Pitman, has recently presented to the Society a portrait of his great-grandfather, Thomas Goddard. Attached to the frame of the portrait is the key to the shop—a carpenter's shop—which stood close to the water's edge, on Washington street, and was known throughout the length and breadth of Newport as "Goddard's Shop." Thomas Goddard, who was born in 1765 and died in 1858, and his father before him, have immortalized the family name in the furniture which by reason of its exquisite design and workmanship commands today almost fabulous prices. In that old shop Goddard worked; in that old shop the benevolence of the smile that greets us in his portrait made happier the hearts of those who came within its radius—and there were many of them. For "Goddard's Shop" was the gathering place of the dwellers on the "Point," many of whom were fishermen, and so strong was their love of the water and of their boats that floated on it, that even after they had come ashore from a day's fishing, they would rather linger about the old shop, within sight and

sound of them, than go home.

Thomas Goddard's portrait is a welcome and valuable addition to the Society's collections, and the key still opens the door to happy memories.

In the Directors' Room is a special exhibition of articles which once belonged to Gilbert Stuart and Miss Jane Stuart. The discovery of these interesting souvenirs of the great painter, and of his daughter, who so endeared herself to the citizens of Newport, is of recent date, and for their acquisition the Society is indebted to three kind and generous friends who for the present desire to conceal their identity.

The rigors of our winter have reduced to a small minimum the number of visitors to the rooms. But the business of the Society has maintained its normal activity. Meetings have been held with customary regularity—not only those of the Society itself, but also those of the various associations which have the privilege of renting the rooms for that purpose. Correspondence with other institutions of like nature, and in reference to genealogical research, has been of the usual volume.

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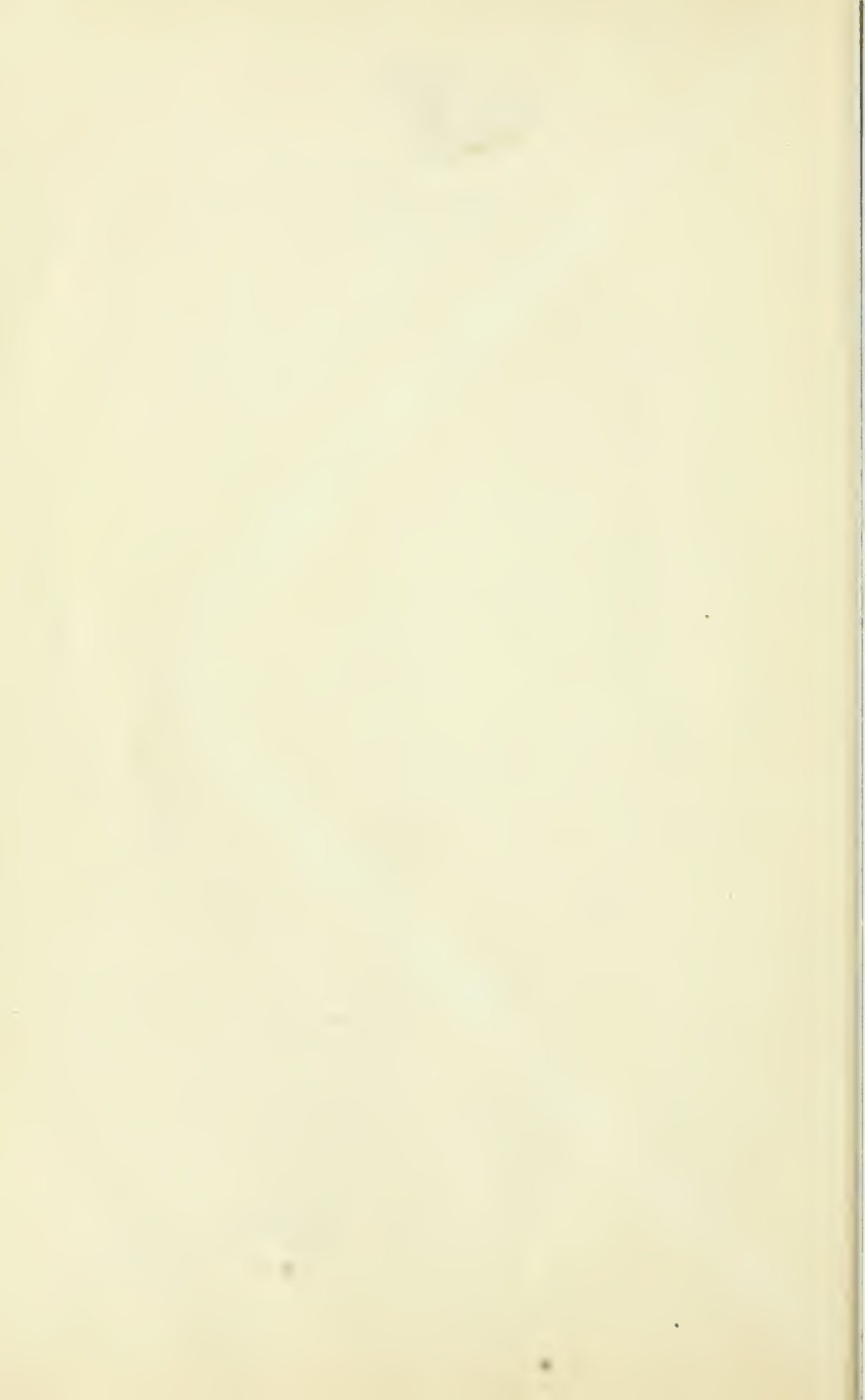
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Bulletins of the Society for sale at the Society's Room.

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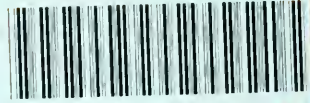
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